

**CITY OF GOODYEAR  
CITY COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:** Analysis of Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRACC) Criteria for 2005 and its Impact on Luke Air Force Base (AFB)

**STAFF PRESENTER:** Jerene Watson, Director, Community Initiatives Department

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Council provide comments to the Department of Defense on the BRACC criteria during the comment period of December 30, 2003 – January 30, 2004 as follows:

- (1) Under Military Value, Criteria #2, *expand the criteria to give weight to training environments and climates that are comparable to other parts of the world where conflicts have existed and are predicted to continue, such as the Middle East.*
- (2) Under Military Value, Criteria #3, *expand the criteria so that there is equal weight given between combat installations and training installations that develop skills that are used and are critical in successfully mobilizing real-world operations, most recently in Iraq, Bosnia and the Gulf War conflicts.*

**COMMUNITY BENEFIT:**

During the public comment period, which ends January 30, 2004, submitting comments that provide additional factors the Commission should weigh that were not included in the eight criteria could potentially strengthen the case for maintaining Luke AFB here in Maricopa County.

**DISCUSSION:**

**History**

The draft selection criteria published in the Federal Register for BRAC '05 overall is very similar to that of past BRAC rounds. Once again the general philosophy is to minimize parochial and political decisions when determining how to maintain military infrastructure to support the best national defense mission. There were no real surprises in the criteria; rather, they appear as a logical extension of the time-tested standards that have proven successful in past rounds. The criteria reflect the Administration's vision for reshaping our Armed Forces into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Analysis**

At first review, the criteria appear to neither favor Luke's survival nor are they cause for undue concern. While the overall philosophy has generally not changed since 1991, nearly fourteen years have passed since the initial Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act was created by Congress.

To the extent that this criteria contains nuances over previous rounds, it is noteworthy that the first item under the heading of "Military Value" focuses on joint war fighting. This is deliberate. In the past fifteen years, our Armed Forces have placed a greater amount of emphasis on its ability to integrate all the branches of our military into what is often referred to as a "seamless architecture" or "joint" warfare capability.

A point by point analysis of the eight draft criteria which they divided under two categories-- Military Value and Other Considerations--follows.

**BRACC CRITERIA: MILITARY VALUE**

**1. THE CURRENT AND FUTURE MISSION CAPABILITIES AND THE IMPACT ON OPERATIONAL READINESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S TOTAL FORCE, INCLUDING THE IMPACT ON JOINT WARFIGHTING, TRAINING AND READINESS.**

Luke is not a joint facility, meaning its mission is solely focused on Air Force operations rather than shared with at least one additional military service. Therefore, our focus should be both on sustaining Luke and working to demonstrate and market Luke's potential to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century facility, with great potential for follow-on missions. Elements that already exist for Luke are:

- ◆ 365-day flying weather
- ◆ Long-term management of the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR)

**The Challenge:** (1) to secure compatible land uses within the entire Southern Departure Corridor (SDC) and (2) to market and lobby the Air Force on Luke's potential for future, joint-training missions, such as the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF).

## **2. THE AVAILABILITY AND CONDITION OF LAND, FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED AIRSPACE (INCLUDING TRAINING AREAS SUITABLE FOR MANEUVER BY GROUND, NAVAL, OR AIR FORCES THROUGHOUT A DIVERSITY OF CLIMATE AND TERRAIN AREAS AND STAGING AREAS FOR THE USE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN HOMELAND DEFENSE MISSIONS) AT BOTH EXISTING AND POTENTIAL RECEIVING LOCATIONS.**

Our installation predominantly meets these requirements and meets the test for a joint-training facility, such as Ft. Irwin National Training Center in California demonstrated by:

- Luke's proximity to the BMGR allows for the airspace, climate, terrain and staging areas needed to prepare for homeland defense and foreign arena actions.
- Navy, Air Force, Army and Marine units utilize the Range as a shared, joint-use asset.
- Auxiliary Fields near Luke are active and municipalities, county and state are working to protect them from encroachment as well.
- Congress and the Air Force have continued to fund large infrastructure projects at Luke that has strengthened a permanent mission and has been an indicator of the importance given to this largest-in-the-world fighter training facility.

**The Challenge:** to keep encroachment at bay, not only in the noise contours and flight paths to the Range, but also from an airspace perspective.

## **3. THE ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE CONTINGENCY, MOBILIZATION AND FUTURE TOTAL FORCE REQUIREMENTS AT BOTH EXISTING AND POTENTIAL RECEIVING LOCATIONS TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS AND TRAINING.**

Luke is part of a training command versus a composite or forces command. Although the criterion references training, this point seems to relate more towards mobilization and operations. Luke's noise contour footprint falls within degrees of acceptability for the future generation aircraft, the JSF.

**The Challenge:** the current mission of the base is education and training. Tying the mission to the mobilization and operations efforts that the Iraq, Bosnia and Gulf War conflicts required is essential in the efforts to keep Luke open and operating here in Maricopa County.

## **4. THE COST OF OPERATIONS AND THE MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS.**

BRAC was created to close facilities *en masse* due to the inequity in the ratio of manpower to facilities following the post-Cold War downsizing of our military in the 1980s. Closing Luke and moving F16 training is not deemed by many as a prudent option the Air Force should consider until such a time that modern warfare changes substantially from the technology of today. Although the JSF is projected to come "on line" between 2012 and 2017, the F16 will still be 50% of the Air Force inventory twenty years from now. It has long been the hope and desire of the US Air Force that our state and local communities would maintain the responsibility to adequately address encroachment issues around all military installations.

**The Challenge:** The Wing Commander ordered Luke's Northern Departure Corridor (NDC) closed for live ordnance flights, degrading Luke's ability to conduct its mission in the eyes of Defense Department officials. The question that will be before BRAC and the Air Force is one of a practical nature that goes beyond the Commission. Will necessity and practicality outweigh the cost issue?

## **BRACC CRITERIA: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **5. THE EXTENT AND TIMING OF POTENTIAL COSTS AND SAVINGS, INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF YEARS, BEGINNING WITH THE DATE OF COMPLETION OF THE CLOSURE OR REALIGNMENT, FOR THE SAVINGS TO EXCEED THE COSTS.**

This is an interesting category. The Secretary's broad goal is to eliminate waste on extraneous facilities with the added goal of transferring these savings into modernization and research & development. The jury is very much out on this issue at it relates to LAFB. At present it would be very costly, and wasteful, to move the Luke mission elsewhere. It is a debatable point whether there presently exists in the Air Force inventory a facility that could absorb Luke's mission. The longer-term question may hinge on where the follow-on mission to the F16 goes.

Luke is rather unique among facilities in the Air Force and stands out as one of only a small handful of Air Force installations that have received sizable military construction dollars for land acquisition. This is very important because the appropriations were requested not just from our congressional delegation but from the Air Force itself, giving credence to the importance that the Air Force places on Luke Air Force Base.

### **6. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON EXISTING COMMUNITIES IN THE VICINITY OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.**

Per the Maguire and ASU West studies (1998 and 2003 respectively), the financial impact is sizable and significant, with \$1.4 billion flowing annually into the state because of this operation. With the exception of a very few citizen NIMBY's or a small segment of the development community, its economic impact provides a sizeable engine for this region and the state, sustaining a stable employment and tax base for Arizona.

### **7. THE ABILITY OF BOTH THE EXISTING AND POTENTIAL RECEIVING COMMUNITIES' INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT FORCES, MISSIONS, AND PERSONNEL.**

The "R" in BRAC stands for realignment; e.g., an existing facility's ability to either reshape its present mission or to absorb a completely new mission. With the housing and other modernization changes taking place at Luke, and with the new federal dollars moving into the facility for force protection and land acquisition, Luke would likely stand strong in this category.

### **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, INCLUDING COSTS RELATED TO POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION.**

Luke was part of a Superfund clean-up effort and was removed from the federal Superfund site list about 18 months ago. The Commission will look at a cost benefit analysis *vis a vis* preserving the facility in the inventory versus closing it and cleaning it.

**The Challenge:** the fact that there would be no clean-up cost to the Department of Defense must not become a factor that might tip the scales for Luke to be placed in the "close" category when compared to another facility that might have significant clean-up needs.

### **Recommendation**

While the public comment period is open until January 30, the criteria set are intentionally global and not likely to change much, if at all. However, with Goodyear in the limelight and as Home to Luke's Southern Departure Corridor, it would be a positive leadership move to go on the record as having seriously reviewed and evaluated the criteria to be used in the 2005 BRAC deliberations. Therefore, two comments appear warranted as and are suggested as a small gesture to assist in keeping Luke AFB off the closure list during the deliberations of the Commission.

**1. Under Military Value, Criteria #2 (as above): expand the criteria to give weight to training environments and climates that are comparable to other parts of the world where conflicts have existed and are predicted to continue, such as the Middle East.**

Rationale: This addition potentially could add additional points for Luke and other Arizona installations due to the fact that the climate, topography and atmospheric conditions of Arizona closely parallel the geography of recent, real-world conflicts in the Middle East.

**2. Under Military Value, Criteria #3 (as above): expand the criteria so that there is equal weight given between combat installations and training installations that develop skills that are used and are critical in successfully mobilizing real-world operations, most recently in Iraq, Bosnia and the Gulf War conflicts.**

Rationale: This addition would help put an education and training base, like Luke, on equal footing with an Air Combat Command installation, underscoring the nexus between the essential mission of training that then is later used in real-world engagements and conflicts. It was reported by a former Luke official that every pilot who flew in Iraq was trained at one point at Luke AFB.

### **Conclusion**

Our local mission must be to convince all stakeholders and public leaders that Luke is not "BRACC proofed" simply because of some individuals subjectively interpreting the criteria or because of the efforts of our congressional delegation in securing an appropriation. We should be concerned that these comments and opinions may have an adverse psychological effect, lulling people into a false confidence, suggesting that Luke has been spared and we can simply wait out the Commission's final report.

As General Tom Browning has said repeatedly, we are discussing the same issues today that we have discussed in the past regarding Luke. Historically, there has been a great deal of interest around Luke when a BRAC round looms followed by a great sigh of relief when BRAC goes away. By dodging previous rounds, we've temporarily put off the primary and extremely complex underlying issues regarding Luke: encroachment, land acquisition and dollars.

Hopefully through the Governor's Task Force recommendations in December 2003, as well as the creative energies of city, county, state, business community, citizens and Luke officials, we can ensure that any thought on Luke steers away from one of doing the minimum to assure Luke's survival, to one in which recognizes DoD's doctrinal changes and helps Luke emerge as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century facility.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is a recommending report with no impact other than staff time and resources.

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